

Child Care Checklist

The Caregiver

- ☐ Appears to be warm and friendly.
- ☐ Is comfortable to talk to.
- ☐ Encourages parents to visit.
- ☐ Is responsive, supportive and sensitive to children and their needs.
- ☐ Treats each child as special.
- ☐ Helps children learn to get along with and respect others.
- ☐ Explains rules clearly and reinforces positive behavior.
- ☐ Has similar ideas concerning discipline and child rearing.

The Environment

- ☐ Is clean, cheerful and comfortable.
- ☐ Has good light, heat and ventilation.
- ☐ Has varied kinds of space for quiet play, active play and outdoor play.
- ☐ Has enough books, paints, blocks, musical toys, games and puzzles.
- ☐ Has a place for each child's personal belongings.
- ☐ Is safe and free of hazards and has:
 - ___ First aid supplies
 - ___ Emergency exits
 - ___ Posted emergency phone numbers
 - ___ Fire extinguishers
 - ___ No sharp edges on furniture
 - ___ Covered wall sockets

Learning Opportunities

- ☐ Are the children respected as individuals?
- ☐ Is there a variety of toys and equipment for each child's development level?
- ☐ Are there learning opportunities suitable for the different ages of the children?
- ☐ How much television is used and what programs are watched?
- ☐ Are there policies regarding nutrition, toileting, napping and discipline?
- ☐ Does the program accept and respect your family's cultural values?
- ☐ Is there a daily plan of activities?

Overall

- ☐ I feel comfortable
- ☐ The references checked out.
- ☐ The license was made available.
- ☐ The program is accredited.

Other Notes



Compliments of Assemblymember
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ABCs of Choosing Child Care

ASK YOURSELF SOME QUESTIONS. What will I need in terms of location and hours? What will my child need physically, emotionally, socially and educationally? What size group do I prefer for my child? What can I afford?

BY GATHERING REFERRALS from your local resource and referral agency, you'll be prepared to begin looking for child care that's best suited for you and your child.

Be sure you visit more than one provider. Visit when children are present and take your child. Ask for at least two references and check them before making a final decision. A check list is provided to help you during your visit.

CHILDREN, LIKE ADULTS, need time to adjust to new situations. Once you've made a decision, try to prepare your child for the change from home to child care. Here are some ideas to help make the transition easier for you and your child.

- *Talk about where you are going and why.*
- *Visit the facility together before child care begins.*
- *Allow your child to bring along a favorite toy or blanket.*
- *When you leave, let your child know you are going never sneak away. Teach them to follow the rules.*
- *Remember, if you're enthusiastic, chances are your child will be too.*

License Requirement

Most California child care centers are licensed by the Department of Social Services. Licensing is intended to ensure a minimal standard of health and safety protection for children. Licensing, however, does not guarantee the quality of a child care center or home. Additionally, many important areas of child care such as curriculum guidelines, staff training, parent participation, cultural awareness and decision-making are not addressed by licensing.

Types of Child Care

Licensed Family Day-Care Homes:

This care takes place in someone else's home and offers a small group setting for your child. State law provides that licensees may offer care for a maximum of six children including their own children under age twelve. No more than three of the children may be infants (birth to two years of age). When there is an assistant caregiver, the maximum is twelve children, and no more than four may be infants.

Licensed Child Day Care Centers:

Child care centers, nursery schools, Head Start programs, parent cooperatives and pre-schools are center-based programs that will care for your child in groups of twelve or more. These programs vary in the number of hours children are in care, the type of learning environments they offer, and the specific goals of the program.

State law requires at least one adult for every twelve preschool-age children or every four infants. When selecting a center for your child, the most important factors to consider are the ratio of children to adults and the qualification and experience of the staff.

In-Home Child Care:

Includes babysitters or nannies hired by a parent to care for the child in the parent's home. Specific tax and employment rules apply to this type of care.

Exempt Child Care:

Exempt child care refers to caregivers who do not need a background in caring for children. Such caregivers have not had their backgrounds checked for criminal or child abuse activities. Child care that is exempt includes:

- *A person hired to care for your child at home*
- *A family child care home that cares for children from one family only.*
- *"Drop-in" arrangements such as those provided in a health club or supermarket.*
- *Certain recreation programs such as summer camp.*
- *Child care programs run by a school district.*
- *Care given by a relative or guardian.*

Trustline – Background Check Service

For a fee, prospective caregiver's backgrounds are checked against the state's criminal and child abuse indexes. Once they've cleared a background check their name is put on the TRUSTLINE registry. To check a name on the registry, or to receive more information on this service, parents should call 1-800-822-8490.

Area Resource and Referral Agencies:

Connections for Children:
(310) 452-3202

Children's Home Society of California:
(562) 901-3157

Chrystal Stairs, Inc.:
(323) 299-0199

When Choosing a Child Care Center, Visit the Location and Talk With the Director.

Ask the Director these questions:

1. What is the cost of care and when is it due?
2. Is there a charge if you are late picking up your child?
3. What do you need to bring for your child?
4. What are the grounds, notice and payment requirements for ending your child care arrangement?
5. What is the provider's philosophy on discipline?
6. Will the caregivers you observe actually be the ones with your child?
7. How long has each caregiver been with the center? Make sure there is not a high turnover rate since children are more likely to thrive in consistent care.
8. What qualifications does the director look for in hiring staff?
9. How many children will be in your child's group? How many caregivers will regularly be present?
10. What is the policy about illness?
11. Is there anyone on staff with training in first aid? *(There should be)* What physician or hospital emergency room does the center use if immediate action is required?